

## Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO USINT HAVANA

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: SOPN,CU

SUBJECT: NOON BRIEFING

FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM NOON BRIEFING OF MAY 15 WHICH  
ARE RELATED TO CUBA AND WHICH YOU MAY NOT HAVE RECEIVED  
IN OTHER REPORTING CABLES FROM DEPT:

Q. HODDING, IF WE CAN GO BACK TO THE MIDDLE EAST AGAIN,  
PLEASE? THERE IS A REPORT OUT OF BEIRUT TO THE EFFECT  
THAT THE PLO IS INTERESTED IN HAVING CUBAN TROOPS MOVE INTO  
SOUTHERN LEBANON. THE STORY IS SOMEWHAT FUZZY, TO BE SURE,  
BUT THERE IS SOME KIND OF AN IMPLICATION THAT THE PLO  
IS PREPARED TO ASK SUPPORT FROM CUBA.

RELATED TO THAT, THERE IS ANOTHER REPORT THAT THE MORALE  
OF THE UN FORCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON IS SAGGING. THE PLO  
UNITS ARE INFILTRATING SOUTHERN LEBANON, AND IT IS GIVING  
RISE, I SUPPOSE, TO SOME SPECULATION THAT THERE MAY BE A  
GREAT PROBLEM WITH THE UN FORCE.

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A. ON THE FIRST QUESTION, WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY CUBAN  
TROOPS--TO REPEAT MYSELF FROM A QUESTION THAT WAS ASKED  
BEFORE--OR EVEN PERSONNEL BEING INJECTED INTO LEBANON.

SECONDLY, WE WOULD STRONGLY OPPOSE SUCH INTERVENTION IN  
LEBANON. WE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT'S  
EFFORTS TO EXTEND ITS AUTHORITY OVER THE COUNTRY. IN ITS

SOVEREIGN CAPACITY, ONLY THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON HAS THE AUTHORITY TO AUTHORIZE ANY FOREIGN ACTIVITY WITHIN LEBANON'S BORDERS, AND THEY CLEARLY DO NOT WISH TO HAVE CUBAN TROOPS THERE.

Q. LET ME ASK YOU, THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT HAS ACTUALLY TOLD US THAT LEBANON IS OPPOSED TO ANY CUBAN TROOPS ENTERING LEBANON?

A. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THEY ARE NOT WILLING TO SEE THE CONFLICT ALONG THE LINES THAT WERE SUGGESTED IN THAT INTERVIEW, I THINK, EXTENDED IN ANY WAY, AND THAT WOULD INCLUDE THE INTRODUCTION OF CUBAN TROOPS.

IN ANY CASE, LET ME SAY, JOE, TO BE PERFECTLY HONEST, DESPITE SPORADIC REPORTS OF, WE ARE WILLING TO CALL UPON, OR THE CUBANS WOULD BE WILLING TO DO THIS, WE SEE NO SIGNS WHATSOEVER OF SUCH INVOLVEMENT.

ON THE SECOND QUESTION YOU RAISE, THE UN, WE BELIEVE, IS DOING AN OUTSTANDING JOB IN LEBANON. UN TROOPS HAVE SHOWN THAT THEY HAVE THE COURAGE AND DETERMINATION TO CARRY OUT THE DIFFICULT TASKS THAT ARE ASSIGNED TO THEM. THERE IS EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO.

WHEN THAT FORCE WAS ESTABLISHED, NO ONE HAD ANY ILLUSION  
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ABOUT IT BEING AN EASY TASK. THE PURPOSES UNDER WHICH UNIFIL WERE ESTABLISHED REMAIN--TO GAIN WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES FROM LEBANON, TO ESTABLISH A PEACEKEEPING FORCE TO MAINTAIN SECURITY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, AND TO RE-ESTABLISH LEBANESE GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.

PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE ON ALL THREE FRONTS, BUT THERE ARE STILL REAL PROBLEMS FACING UNIFIL, PROBLEMS WHICH, IN OUR VIEW, CAN BE OVERCOME.

I WOULD JUST NOTE THAT UNIFIL'S CAPACITY TO MEET ITS RESPONSIBILITIES RELIES IN GREAT PART ON COOPERATION FROM ALL THE PARTIES, AND IT IS THAT KIND OF COOPERATION WHICH WE CONTINUE TO URGE.

Q. HODDING, ON A RELATED QUESTION, THE PRESIDENT, OVER THE WEEKEND, ACTUALLY LAST FRIDAY, IN A VERY CAREFULLY WORDED STATEMENT TALKED ABOUT CUBANS MOVING LATELY INTO THE MIDDLE EAST, AND HE ONLY SINGLED OUT SOUTH YEMEN, WHERE THEY HAVE BEEN FOR ABOUT EIGHT YEARS.

CAN YOU GIVE OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST WHERE THERE ARE CUBANS, AND THEY HAVE MOVED IN THERE LATELY?

A. I THINK, AS WE HAVE POINTED OUT IN SOMETHING THAT WAS POSTED OR WAS OFFERED OVER THE WEEKEND, THAT WHILE THEY HAVE BEEN THERE FOR SOME TIME, THAT DURING THE GREAT BUILD-UP IN ETHIOPIA, THE FORCE'S PRESENCE WAS AUGMENTED.

OTHER THAN THAT, AND OTHER THAN THE ETHIOPIAN FACTS WHICH ARE FAIRLY WELL DOCUMENTED, I DON'T HAVE CUBAN FORCES TO OFFER YOU.

I THINK THE PRESIDENT WAS SPEAKING OF THE GENERAL INTRUSION OF CUBAN FORCES IN THAT AREA, AND THE AUGMENTA-  
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TION WHICH DID TAKE PLACE IN THE YEMENIST PART OF THAT OPERATION INTO ETHIOPIA.

Q. THE PRESIDENT ALSO SPOKE OF HEAVY CASUALTIES BEING SUFFERED BY THE CUBAN FORCES. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME ANY SPOKESMAN FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS EVEN GIVEN A HINT THAT WE KNOW HOW MANY CUBANS HAVE BEEN KILLED OR WOUNDED IN BATTLE. AND IF THERE IS A FIGURE, A BALL-PARK FIGURE, OR EVEN A PRECISE FIGURE WHICH IS AVAILABLE, IT WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE IT.

A. NO, I DON'T HAVE A FIGURE TO GIVE YOU. THE CUBANS HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED A FEW INDIVIDUAL DEATHS IN ANGOLA AND ETHIOPIA. IT IS EQUALLY CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT HAS NOT TOLD ITS PEOPLE OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF ITS LOSSES, PARTICULARLY IN THE OGADEN WHERE CUBAN TROOPS WERE HEAVILY INVOLVED.

SINCE THERE HAS NOT BEEN A PUBLICATION OF CASUALTY LISTS, I THINK THAT I AM NOT IN MUCH OF A POSITION TO GIVE YOU A SET OF FIGURES, BUT I WOULD STAND BY WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAID. VANCE

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